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## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Seed Dispersal in *Templetonia sulcata*** — *Templetonia sulcata* is a rounded, leafless shrub growing to 1.5 m. After flowering in winter and early spring dark brown seed pods form containing 1-3 seeds. The pods are about 10 mm long and have walls 1 mm thick at their thickest point.

While collecting seed pods to obtain seed for a revegetation program it was observed that when the pods were exposed to sudden changes in temperature or humidity they sometimes opened violently. The force of the action can be sufficient to propel each half of the pod, together with whatever seed they contain, for several metres.

Subsequent observations of pods in situ suggest that in ambient conditions the pods may also open vigorously when exposed to a sudden change to their microclimate such as during a rainstorm. This mechanism at least ensures the removal of the seed from beneath the canopy of the parent plant although other vectors, such as ants, may play a more important role in their actual dispersal.

The phenomenon has been noted in other leguminous plants and is sometimes utilised for seed collection (R. Beckett, pers. comm.). Sheets are spread on the ground around the shrub and the pods sprayed with water.

— GREG BARRETT, 8 Buller Street, Kalgoorlie 6430.

**Notes on nesting chats** — Crimson Chats have long been known to visit the northern part of the Swan Coastal Plain, but until recently they were not known to breed here. On 4 November 1983 I watched a mixed flock of 20 Crimson and 30 White-fronted Chats feeding on swarming grasshopper nymphs 5 km east of Two Rocks. Here, six days later, I found a nest of the Crimson Chat with three hatchlings.

On 16 October 1985 C.P. Stevens and I discovered a nest of the White-fronted Chat that was peculiar for two reasons: it was unusually coarse and large, and it was the first I had seen placed on the ground. The nest was in a shallow scrape in sand among maturing potatoes at Wanneroo. It was made of potato leaves and stalks and lined with fine grass rootlets. Its external measurements were 140 x 150 mm, and the egg cavity was 33 mm deep and 45 mm in diameter. Although there were plenty of shrubs in the vicinity, the birds chose to nest in a potato field; having done so, they had to build on the ground, for the dying potato bushes were not suitable for nesting in.

— N. KOLICHIS, 20 Galena Place, Carine W.A.